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AGRICULTURAL.

☞ *"Agriculture is the chief foundation of a nation's power, as it not only furnishes man with food and clothing, but also with materials for the mechanic arts, and commerce."*

From the Journal of Agriculture.

MANAGEMENT OF THE COMPOST HEAP.

By Prof. J. J. Mapes.

Since the abandonment by many farmers of the open barn-yard system, and the daily removal of refuse as well as fecal matters to the compost shed, it becomes important to adopt the best methods for the managment of composts.

When composts are immeased in water, as in the bottom of dished barnyards, the presence of the water prevents the admission of atmosphere, and the decomposition is necessarily slow for want of atmospheric assistance; while the small portions containing the larger proportion of nitrogen decompose, assume the gaseous form, and rise up through the water, escape into the atmosphere, and are lost.

If manures are placed in a heap without a proper degree of moisture being added as required, the decompositon proceeds too rapidly in parts, causing some of the woody fibre or the straw, &c., to be reduced to an ash, and presenting the appearance known as *fire-fanged*; and from such parts all the more valuable or ammoniacal portions are lost, for they ascend through the heap and into the air, from the sudden expansion caused by the great heat given off by the fire-fanging portions.

Every farmer is familiar with this action, and cannot but recognize its truth.

Many operators endeavor to prevent fire-fanging by turning the heap often and, this is frequently done while the heap is in heat, thus exposing new surfaces and causing an immense loss of ammonia.

It is therefore evident that some plan should be adopted which would ensure a proper degree of moisture to the compost heap to prevent fire-fanging to secure the low part of the heap from being *immersed* in water, and to do away with the necessity of frequent turnings, and consequent loss of ammonia. Added to these, the plan adopted should be such as to secure an intimate admixture of all the parts of the heap. All these desirable conditions may be availed of by the following plan.

The compost heap may be of any length and of any width, but should never exceed six feet in height, and should be covered so as to prevent unnecessary exposure to winds, drenching rains, &c. It should be placed on the ground so as to make one end lower than the other; and at the end a cistern or sunken cask should be placed, to receive the drainage of the compost heap. In this cistern should be a pump for forcing the drainage twice a week, or oftener, on top the heap; and if at any time the cistern should be dry, water should be added to it, until the compost heap contains such an amount of moisture as to re-fill the cistern twice per week.

On top the heap a gutter should be placed for its whole length, with small holes in its lower part, and the fluid from the pump will be thus more evenly distributed. The gutter may be moved from time to time, as occasion may require, so as to water the top more evenly.

By such an arrangement the soluble parts of every particle of the manure will be continually changing places, the richer portions furnishing the necessary ingredients to enrich the more inert parts, and thus causing a more intimate admixture than could be obtained from one hundred turnings of the heap with a fork.

Manures thus fermented will not decrease in bulk as when ordinarily treated, and the value will be much greater. When the materials used are rich in nitrogenous matter, then coats of muck, river mud, leaves from the woods, headlands, &c., may be thrown on each day, in addition to the dung from the stables; and when the heap arrives at the desired height, the top should be covered with decomposed muck, or other cheap organic matter, to absorb the gasses, should any arise; while the descending fluids, after being pumped up from the cistern, will charge such inert matters with all the constituent parts of the mass below. As the fermentation proceeds, many substances will be rendered soluble by chemical action, and, after full decomposition, the gasses having been all absorbed by the more inert portions, the manure will be of even quality.

We have so made our composts, and, by proper additions, have been able to use many times the bulk of swamp muck to that of stable manure used, every load of which was superior in quality to pure barn-yard manure which had been ordinarily treated, the valuable portions of which had been lost.

In this cistern may be thrown all the wastes of the house, soap-suds, urine, night-soil, &c., &c.; and where the soil is known to require super-phosphate of lime, chlorine, soda, potash, or any other soluble substance, it may be thrown into the cistern and be evenly disseminated through the heap.

In cold weather, if the fermentation be sluggish, hot water may be run into the cistern, and immediately forced upon the heap, and, sinking into the mass without losing heat, the whole quantity will readily become affected.

After the heap is supposed to be sufficiently fermented, or a few days previous to its use in the field, a pint of sulphuric acid for every cord of manure may be thrown into the cistern, applying a part of the required quantity each day for a few days, and pumped upon the heap; this will change all the carbonate of ammonia and other volatile matters into sulphates, which are not volatile, and will prevent their evaporation during removal, exposure when being plowed in, carting, handling, &c., &c.

A gutter from the hog-pen, running to this cistern, and a fair supply of water to the pen, will, for many crops, supply an admirable addition, and will so divide the pig manure through the mass as to prevent the usual difficulties arising from the use of pig manure, such as clump rooting, &c., &c.

For market gardners, and others requiring liquid manures, the plan proposed is very effective, for any amount of water may be passed through the heap, and removed from the cistern for distribution on the soil. As the fermentation proceeds, the quantity of soluble matter is increased, and its quality may be varied at pleasure by the addition of other ingredients.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS.

North Carolina produced in the year 1849, upwards of 28 millions of bushels of corn: the number of inhabitants is over eight hundred thousand. Allowing five millions of bushels for the support of the inhabitants, and ten millions for stock, we have 13 millions for exportation, nearly twenty bushels for each inhabitant. In short, the corn crop was sufficient for home consumption, and to realize, at forty cents per bushel, some six dollars for each inhabitant, black and white, old and young, male and female, and this would average at least sixty dollars to each head of a family. Is the State becoming bankrupt? Her corn crop alone will bread her, and furnish each head of a family fifty dollars over. The wheat crop was over two millions of bushels, an average of about three bushels to each soul.

She made upwards of twelve millions of pounds of tobacco: more than ninety-eight thousand bales of ginned cotton, equal to thirty-nine millions of pounds and over. More than nine hundred thousand pounds of wool, ten thousand gallons of wine, four million pounds of butter—nearly one hundred and fifty thousand tons of hay, and more than two millions of dollars worth of home made goods, iron, &c. &c. This is exclusive of fish, lumber and live stock, great and leading staples in North Carolina.

In short, according to the census table, it is fair to estimate the productions of North Carolina (exclusive of minerals, fish, lumber and live-stock) as equal to the support of the State, and one hundred dollars over for each head of a family. Allowing the value of the excepted articles to pay all taxes, for all works of improvement, and to cover all imposts and contingences, we can justly conclude that the productions of our State will support it in ease and luxury, and average one hundred dollars profit to each head of a family. And this at a time when every species of industry is at a low ebb, and the resources of the State not half developed.

Weekly Post.

NORTH CAROLINA FARMING—GREAT CORN CROPS.

To those who have always been accustomed to farming less than a hundred acres, the following statement will look like a large story as well as large farming; but it is nevertheless true that there is a father and son, in the State of North Carolina, who cultivate 3,500 acres of land, and make an average annual crop of corn, (unless in bad seasons, or loss by flood or accident,) of *one hundred and fifty thousand bushels!!* A quantity sufficient to feed an army of 5,769 men, with a half a bushel a week for a whole year. The regular time of planting this crop is to commence on the first of April, upon the warmest and driest fields and proceed with all possible dispatch; the ground having been previously all plowed; that is, no middle or unplowed strips are left between the rows, as is common with some farmers, to be broken out after the corn is up and ready to be worked. The whole is planted in drills five feet apart, and the stalks left to grow according to the strength of the land—three feet being the greatest distance.

The method of working the crop is to commence as soon as the corn is well up and run a furrow upon each side as near the row as possible, turning the dirt away from the corn, follow by hoe hands who replant or chop out to a stand, as may be required. The second plowing consists of five furrows in each row, with one of Allen's No. 60 plows, a kind in high favor where known. After that he aims as near as possible, to give the whole crop a plowing once in three weeks, until it is laid by; dispensing almost entirely with hilling, and using the hoe as little as possible. With the last plowing, peas are sown, upon which plaster is applied, and this, with slight exceptions, is all the manuring the land receives: the magnitude of the operations rendering it next to impossible to haul stable manure upon any part of the land, except the most convenient portion.

Two good horses and three hands are calculated to cultivate fifty acres, averaging the light and heavy lands throughout.

The usual time of commencing harvest is about the middle of October, though he prefers a later period, as the earliest gathered corn often injures in curing. The kind mostly grown is the white dent, or gourd seed, which according to analysis, contains a large proportion of starch, and is much used in that manufacture.

The corn is all shelled by horse power machinery, but the proprietor has it in serious consideration to use steam.

Cobs for Manure.—We inquired what use he made of his cobs. His reply was, I rot them and then spread the residium upon the land, but have never been able to get my hands to use it in sufficiently small quantities to prevent injuring the crop—the quantity of potash being so great, it fires the corn, and in some instances has destroyed the crop where it was applied.

We regret we are not at liberty to give the name of this great corn planter to our readers; but in giving us the foregoing items, he insisted that his name should not be mentioned, fearing it might appear like boasting—the same feeling, we fear, keeps back a great many important facts which would be interesting to our readers if communicated either in letters to us, or in articles for publication.—*The Plow.*

Profits of Farming.—The N. Y. State Agricultural Society are in the habit of awarding, at their annual meetings, premiums for the most successful management of farms. In 1850, the second of these premiums, a silver cup, valued $30, was taken by Daniel D. R. Moore, Esq., of Watervlet, Albany county. The written statement of his operations, made under oath, is very full and interesting; and we wish we had room to present it to our readers without abridgment His success is enough to make the old-fashioned farmers fairly open their eyes with astonishment, and shows what skill, and energy, and perseverence may accomplish.—He is growing rich on the same land where others have become poor.

His farm consists of one hundred and eighty-five acres, situated upon the light sandy soil near Albany. For fifty years before it became into his possession, it had been under lease, and for a portion of that time in the market. The tenants held it only from year to year, and consequently had no incentives to make improvements. Each one worked it upon the principle of realizing the greatest profit at the least expense. Under this system of exhaustion, it became so reduced that the last tenant considered it no longer worth the rent of a hundred dollars, for the whole yearly sales of produce were only about four times that amount. The buildings and fences were in a ruinous condition; the few fruit trees were old and diseased; and a good part of the premises were allowed to run to waste.

Mr. Moore purchased in opposition to the advice of his friends, and in November, 1845, he took possession. He was unprepared to pay down the whole of the purchase money, so that he has been obliged to pay as interest more than the former occupant had paid as rent. The dwelling-house he sold for fifty dollars, but the barn was worth so little that he tore it down. He then erected comfortable and substantial buildings, and commenced enclosing the tract with a post and board fence. In five years time he has succeeded in rendering the soil as fertile and productive as the very best in his vicinity, and, as we have seen above, has taken a premium from the State Society for his good management.—The total receipts in 1850 amounted to over *four thousand eight hundred dollars;* and the profits, after deducting the farm and family expences, exceed *twenty-six hundred dollars.*

Such an instance of success should be known over the whole country. Farming is too often looked upon as a poor business, not adapted to persons of intelligence and enterprise.—Young men flock to the city in crowds, in the hope of bettering their condition; while those who remain under the paternal roof, never take an interest in their occupation, and are content with a mere subsistence. Those who fail in farming, would probably fail in other and "more respectable" pursuits; but many that make capital farmers, would prove merchants. Commerce is a gigantic lottery, where at least ninety-five out of a hundred draw blanks; the prizes are magnificent but they are few in number. The soil is a faithful servant, which will restore the five talents, with other five which they have gained. Its rewards are slow, but sure; it gives a living to all, and to skill, forethought and iron-hearted industry and unflinching perseverance, it offers a competence moderate, yet sufficient. Let the farmer possess the secret of success,—good management,—and he need never complain of ill-luck, or grumble at the caprice of Fortune.

American Courier.

STEAM PLOW.

We published a few days ago a notice of the steam plowing machine, which Mr. Alexander T. Watson of New York, has just invented. He is now in Washington, as we learn from the National Intelligencer, prepared to expose it to public exhibition. The machine will in land suited to its operations, plough, sow and harrow thirty or forty acres a day. There seems no doubt as to its capacity to do the appointed work, the only questions being whether the cost will be such as to enable the farmer to avail himself of it. It is proposed to substitute McCormick's reaper for the plough, so as to enable the same motive power to perform both operations. If in addition, as one of the New York papers suggests, it may be attached to threshing and grinding, it will be made to discharge most of the heavy work of the farm. Mr. Watson's invention will then become the hand-maid of all work. It does not occur to us that the variety of work which the machine can be made to perform, will render it a cheaper motive power than if it could be applied to one species of work only. The various species of work above directed, viz: ploughing, harrowing, reaping, threshing, grinding, coming in rotation upon the farmer, can be accomplished by the present cheaper mode, and all in a reasonable period. Unless it can add to the productiveness of the land, which is not pretended, or can be made to save in the expense of labour, we see no gain in economy. But it performs work so rapidly that it could do the business of many farms; in fact at the rate of forty acres a day, one machine could do the ploughing, reaping and threshing of a whole neighborhood. It seems the era of horseflesh is about to pass away, and that fire-breathing, coal consuming and fleshless animal about to take its place. With the reservation of a few ambling jennets, we will no longer have a demand for the "fleet-footed barb," more especially after an other New York genius has brought into practical use his steam carriage for ordinary turnpike roads. Verily, our people have a marvellous turn for inventions in the useful arts. The London Times said that in the neglected department in the Crystal Palace devoted to American Industry was to be found the only really important inventions made during the last half century. It is to be regretted that for the sake of his own fame and profit, Mr. Watson's machine was not ready to take its place at the World's Fair by the side of the "great reaper."

Rich. Times.

☞ A steam ploughing machine is now on exhibition in this city. It is intended to plough twelve furrows, and perform the operations of ploughing, sowing and harrowing simultaneously.

New York Tribune.

AFRICAN COTTON.

We have heard but little of late of the cultivation of cotton in India, but the attention of some of the speculators has been turned towards a new field, as the following paragraph from the Manchester Guardian will show:

Cotton from Africa.—Yesterday we saw, at the rooms of the Manchester Commercial Association, samples of nine bales of cotton, which have been received by Messrs. Brown, Coultate & Co., brokers, from Africa, and which, as it was brought to London by the ship Governor Maclean, is in all probability the indigenous cotton, gathered in Abeokuta, a portion of the country adjacent to the territories of the King Dahomey. The capabilities of this district for the production of cheap and valuable cotton were pointed out by the Rev. Mr. Crowther, a colored minister, in an interview which took place a short time ago between him and the directors of the Commercial Association. This parcel is the first cleaned cotton which has been received from Africa in bulk, and is valued at from 4½d to 4¾d per lb.

Many of our readers will doubtless recollect the efforts made by the Sultan of Turkey to introduce this culture, and the fact of his having obtained the services and personal supervision of a South Carolina planter, Dr. Davis, for that purpose.

After a full and a fair trial the thing was found to be impracticable, and, if we are not mistaken, the model farms had to be abandoned. The experiment was an interesting one, and its details particularly so. That cotton can be produced in small quantities in many places, with success, cannot be doubted; but that it can be cultivated successfully and profitably on a large scale elsewhere than in our Southern States, peculiarly favored as they are both in climate, soil and institutions, is more than problematical.

Who can beat this.—The Goldsboro' Republican says: "We learn that thirteen bales of cotton, and one hundred and twenty-five barrels (625 bushels) of corn were made to the plough the last season on the Ravenswood Farm in Jones county, belonging to Miss Burgwyn. The large crop is attributed to the plentiful use of lime, and to deep ploughing. Can any of our farmers equal the crop of Miss Burgwyn? If they can, send us notice thereof. We want to know who can do it, and also how it is done."

A Thought for Planters.—The universal cry is "HARD TIMES."—There is a general disposition among all classes to find fault with the present condition of things—the causes which are given being almost as varied as the individual complainants. But the most general complaint seems to have its origin in the cotton, and the slight attention bestowed by planters upon diversifying their labor, planting corn, raising provisions and engaging a portion of their capital in manufactures. This cry of overproduction in the great leading staple has become of late so loud, as to lead to the convocation of the Planter's Convention at Macon, and although the result of the deliberations of that body was not of a practicable nature, still we hope it has had the effect of turning popular attention to the great remedy for the evil.

Cotton has always been a cash commodity, and has consequently, so much engrossed the attention of the planter, as in a great degree to banish the thought of bread stuffs and provisions from his mind. All his capital and all his force have been employed in the cultivation of cotton, leaving the Western farmers to supply him with grain, bacon, and corn. Consequently, as cotton is low, and provisions are high, it consumes the whole proceeds of the crop for their purchase Many of the planters of Georgia are now forced to expend in the purchase of corn and bacon, the sums which they have received from the sale of their cotton.

This is certainly a bad policy—a most suicidal policy—and entails evils of no small magnitude upon the agriculturist. It is a policy which deprives the planter of the fruits of his labor and renders him dependent upon others' supplies, which he could with so much ease and with so much less expense produce at home.

So long as this state of things continues, we may expect to hear of "hard times" and harder yet to come. The only remedy is to strike at the root of the evil—to raise supplies of provisions upon every plantation at least sufficiently large to meet individual demands—to cease bestowing undivided attention upon the culture of cotton, and apply a portion of the planting force to the cultivation of corn and other provisions. We are aware that many of our planters do raise their full supply of corn, but there are many—we meet them every day—who are forced to purchase annually a greater or less portion of supplies of this and other articles.

Diversity of labor is the great foundation of the prosperity and wealth of any community, and one of the greatest disadvantages under which the South labors is the absence of this diversity, and the application of so large a portion of its labor to one or two leading staples.

We hope the day will soon arrive when our planters generally will see the benefits which would result from a change in the present impoverishing system, and come to the determination of purchasing nothing which they have the ability to produce at home.—Those, who try this plan, will find it to produce the happiest results. But should any planter fail to pursue it—should he find his cotton swallowed up in the purchase of bacon and corn—should he be troubled out of his life by sleepless nights and daily duns—should he perish amid the accumulated sorrows and griefs arising from his misguided course; then let this epitaph be placed upon his hopeless tomb:

Here lies A. B., a good enough man,
A planter of fifty-one;
Whose death was caused by buying meat
Instead of raising some.

Home Gazette.

Flax Cotton.—According to a paragraph in the New York Post, says the N. C. Star, Claussen's method of preparing flax is extending itself rapidly in this country. In eight of the States, the right of using it has been purchased by various parties; and this has given great impulse to the growth of flax. Mr. Elsworth, formerly of the Patent Office in Washington, and now resident in the Wabash valley of Indians, has sown five hundred acres with flax seed; and Col. Baker, of Illinois, is largely engaged both in the cultivation and preparation of the plant; so that in no very long time, the consumption of flax cotton in our factories will be felt in the decreasing, or rather non-increasing, consumption of cotton and wool.

☞ The Cincinnati Gazette states that J. Davis, of Ross County, Ohio, cultivates 1,800 acres of Indian corn; that he has this winter, "a corn crib filled, which is three miles long, ten feet high, and six feet wide!" H. L. Ellsworth, of La Fayette County, Indiana, cultivates twelve thousand acres, which would require at the same ratio a crib twenty miles long, six feet in height. He is desirous of selling thirty small farms of one thousand acres each.

Hogs in Baltimore.—The Baltimore Price Current, of Saturday last, gave a list of the hogs packed this season in that city. The number was 38,828, a falling off, from last season, of 5,880 head. The average weight of hogs in the season of 1850–'51 was from 180 to 200 lbs; in that of 1851–'52, it has not been been greater than 162 to 170 lbs.

☞ What is it that pays less in proportion to the trouble of cultivation than any thing else? Whiskers.